



CSB Braille Bites

California State Special Schools

Volume 1, Issue 2

February 2010



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Superintendent Message

CSB is very excited to be celebrating our 150th year of providing high quality educational services for the blind students of California – and at the same time continuing to innovate and create new opportunities for our students. Consider sponsoring and attending our anniversary event on May 13th. CSB thanks the California Council of the Blind for dedicating their Spring 2010 convention to our 150th anniversary and providing time on the program for CSB's staff and students to inform CCB of the innovative programming at our school.

In these pages of *Braille Bites*, you will read about unique and diverse programs at CSB, as well as news about our basic program components. Exciting things are happening including: White Cane

By: Stuart Wittenstein



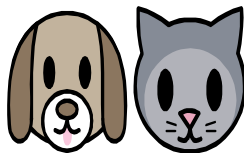
Day, outdoor education, martial arts, gardening, apartment living, STAR testing, and giving back to our community.

And don't miss our dog guide gallery!

I particularly refer you to the poem written by our retiring Orientation & Mobility specialist Gerri Finkelstein. Gerri was moved by the comments of blind artists featured at the Insights Art Show at the San Francisco Lighthouse and shaped their comments into a beautiful tribute to the power of artistic expression.

Enjoy our *Braille Bites* and let us know what you think!

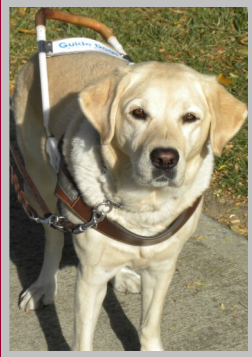
Food Drive and Animal Shelter Drive—Thank You!



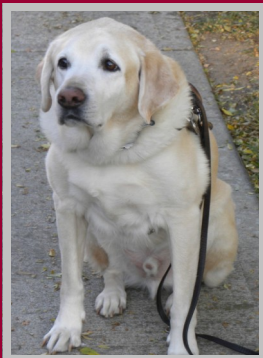
We would like to thank everyone who participated in our 4th annual food and animal drive. We have collected a total of 190 items, a generous donation plus newspaper for the Tri City Food Bank and Animal Shelter. Your donation was a huge success and appreciated this holiday season. We thank you again for caring and sharing!

Sincerely,
Amanda, Will, Robin, Travis, and Theadora

Guide Dogs of CSB



**Ellen
Owner:
Alysa
Chadow,
Teacher**



**Magician
Owner:
Heather
Williams,
Student
Assistant**

Meet Gilly, the dog who spreads the love!

By: Marcia Vickroy

Gillespie, Gilly for short, is a change of career dog guide who lives and comes to work with Marcia Vickroy, one of the

O&M instructors at **CSB**. But when Gilly arrives, he does not stay by Marcia's desk, nor does he go off on lessons with Marcia's students. Instead, Gilly follows his own important schedule working with individual students during the week.

Students come to pick up Gilly to take him for a walk, read to him, groom him or play with him. On Tuesdays at 3:05, six devoted students meet for the Gilly Club. Marcia, Cheryl and Gary, all O&M instructors, supervise the students during activities related to care of a dog. Two years ago, they built a dog house, complete with blue prints and sanding and staining. Last year, students raised funds to raise money for a bullet proof vest for a canine officer with the Fremont police department. This year they are writing letters and sending care packages to a sergeant in

Iraq, raising money for a retractable leash for the service dog with whom he works.



Through all of these activities and experiences students gain many skills in the areas of fine and gross motor skills, communication, time management, recreation, health care, organization and concept development. But more important is the fact that students learn to give back to

others in their own community and afar. They learn the value of appreciating the efforts of others and that recognizing those efforts is gratifying and fulfilling.

We thank Gilly for inspiring us to see what our students can do in ways we might not otherwise imagine.



What is the STAR Program?

by: Julie Manning

All students in grades two through eleven or who are under 18 years of age on December 2, 2009, participate in the STAR (State Testing and Reporting) Program each year. Testing will begin April 26, 2010 and conclude May 11, 2010.

The purpose of these assessments is to measure how well students are learning the knowledge and skills identified in California's content standards. Students with disabilities and students who are English learners are also included in the STAR Program.

Accommodations, modifications, and designated assessments are written into each child's IEP. Julie Manning, CSB Outcomes Coordinator, is available to answer any additional questions. She can be reached at 510-764-3800 x224



Exciting news from our Music Department

By: Wayne Siligo

Things are buzzing in the Music Department!

This New Year finds us with a ton of great expectations and new projects. Many of you know we again have the use of the large choral room that was used for the fitness room for years, and we are excited to see that it goes to work soon. We are going to set up the space as a combination practice, resource and recording studio. You are the first to hear; in the next four months, the **CSB** Jazz Ensemble is going to record a CD of new and original music, featuring the great talents in our present band. And how about this? We're going to record it right here on campus. It will be a great chance for our music students to see and hear how a multi-track recording is

done. Our own Charles Lloyd will do the master recording and I will give a hand on the mix and arranging. When finished, the CD can be downloaded to computer, and MP3 files on many digital playback machines.

Watch for more announcements as we move along. We want student artists to design the CD Cover and perhaps some of our writers can write about the individual songs with a little help from us. In addition, we are already picking out tunes for the next concert. Have a great New Year and see you soon!



Our 150th Anniversary is approaching!

By: Sharon Sacks

A dedicated group of **CSB** faculty and staff are working hard to create an amazing 150th anniversary celebration on May 13, 2010. Plans include a formal program, a reception, followed by a wonderful dinner, the Spring Concert, Art Show, and a gala dessert buffet. Please mark your calendars for this great event, and plan to attend. Invitations will be arriving in your mailboxes in mid-February. Space is limited, so please respond quickly.

We are still looking for anniversary sponsors. If you are able to assist in this effort it would be greatly appreciated. Sponsor levels are as follows:

Silver Sponsor: \$2500

- 2 complimentary banquet tickets
- Full-page ad in the anniversary program

Burgundy Sponsor: \$1000

- 2 complimentary banquet tickets
- 1/2 page ad in the anniversary program

Cheetah Sponsor: \$500

- 2 complimentary banquet tickets
- 1/4 page ad in the anniversary program

Alumni Sponsor: \$250

- 1 complimentary banquet ticket
- 2 line congratulatory message in the anniversary program

Student Sponsor: \$100.00

- 2 line congratulatory message in the anniversary program

Anniversary Sponsor: 50.00

- 1 line congratulatory message in the anniversary program

School Sponsor: \$25.00

- Your name will be put into the anniversary program



Your donations will help to offset the cost of this event. We want it to be inclusive of the whole **CSB** community. We anticipate the cost of dinner to be \$25.00 per person.

Donations can be sent to:

California **S**chool for the **B**lind
c/o James Rudder
500 Walnut Avenue
Fremont, CA 94536.

Checks can be made payable to **CSB** Parents & Friends Association.

Our students and invited guests are planning an innovative and memorable program. We look forward to your participation. If you have questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Sharon Sacks, (510) 794-3800 Ext. 313.

White Cane Day

By: Katie Smith and Gary Shrieves

On October 19, 2009, California School for the Blind (**CSB**) students, staff, and honored guests participated in a full day of activities and celebration for our annual White Cane Day ceremony. The morning began with the opening and ribbon cutting of the student-run "Rocket Shop Café," where representatives of the California Department of Education in Sacramento (Dr. Ronald Kadish, Director, State Special Schools and Services Division; Dr. William Ellerbee, Deputy Superintendent, Special Services and Support Branch; Andrew Laufer, Education Administrator, Special Services and Support Branch) attended to recognize the dedication of **CSB** students and staff and honored **CSB** for its 150th anniversary of providing quality educational services to blind and visually impaired students.

Subsequent events included **CSB's** *March for Safety* along Walnut Avenue where students, staff, and participants held signs, shouted chants, and cheered with on-looking supporters to advocate the need to improve pedestrian safety at the intersection of Walnut

Avenue and *Gallaudet* Drive, an intersection bordering the **CSB** campus.

Although the **CSB** O&M department and Superintendent, Stuart Wittenstein, met with the City of Fremont Traffic Engineers to present a thorough analysis of Walnut Avenue and *Gallaudet* Drive, the City of Fremont has thus far rejected these ideas. The City reported that they based their decision on criteria provided by the California Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices, some of which actually suggest that that we should wait until a certain number of additional accidents occur at the intersection before taking any action.

With near-misses reported by our staff on almost a daily basis, including staff traveling with white canes or dog guides, and a pedestrian-related vehicular accident happening as recently as January, 2009, we, as part of a larger community, are devoted to fulfill its responsibilities in creating the safest possible environment for our students and the citizens of Fremont.

Continued on Page 7

The Beauty I See

By: Gerri Finkelstein

The Beauty I See:

I express the beauty I see
through visually impaired eyes.
I see many images overlapping
on good eye days.
I see nothing on bad eye days.
my vision creates an illusion
of movement and layers.
I step over shadows
and try to pick up sunbeams.
My vision is like a cell phone
connection
that's breaking up badly.
I can only see pieces at a time.
I concentrate on composition and
color
and am not distracted by needless
detail.
The things I touch and cannot touch
have different places in my mind.
Sometimes the end product does not
match
the object I planned to create.
It is still the product of my mind and
imagination.

That's the beauty of art

-Gerri shaped the statements of blind
artists at the SF Lighthouse 2009 Insights art
show into this poem which reflects the
feelings of several blind artists in relations
to the world and their art.

Gardening Club

By: Jason Tucker

With the winter solstice past and daylight hours
beginning to wax again we can focus our sights at
the spring planting season. In ancient times, people
looked to the sky for signs; when to plant, when the
rain would come, and when to harvest a bountiful
crop. Most of us living in the cities cannot see those
signs that our ancestors once waited on so intently,
and have lost the ability to understand the greater
cycles of our universe. During the new moon in
April my ancestors would start their seeds with the
purest of intent and love. Seeds were started
indoors and cared for until the April full moon.
During this waxing phase of the moon the seeds
would also sprout and grow. When the moon was
full the people would light a central fire and
celebrate the growth of a new crop. The people
would dance and sing with their plants and it has
been said that some of the seedlings would grow 3
inches during the night. The next day the planting
would begin.

In memory of our ancestors and the knowledge that
they have passed down through the generations we
plan our spring and summer gardens. Seeds will be
started in the green house in April for most varieties
with seeds being started in February for varieties
that take a long time to mature in order to harvest
before the summer break and upon returning in the
fall. Our group is currently planning a conversion
of unused space approximately 15 feet by 20 feet
near the green house that will be designated for
these spring and summer varieties.

During the slow winter season we await the harvest
of varieties such as broccoli, carrots, winter squash,
and cauliflower. It is a new year; eat well.



White Cane Day (Continued)

Local coverage of **CSB's** White Cane Day events included an appearance in a news segment, "Profiles of Excellence" which aired on Local ABC Channel 7 on November 22, 2009 and an article in a local newspaper, The Argus.

Our celebration concluded with **CSB's** White Cane Day Safety Assembly which included theatrical performance, comedy skits, music, dance, and poetry. Further, the high school mainstream program, calling themselves the "LB Crew," which stands for "Legally Blind" Crew, created a documentary. The documentary included interviews with blind staff members at **CSB** and issues regarding the

challenges of using the white cane on a crowded public high school campus. Personal reflections regarding the social integration of **CSB** students with sighted peers and developing a sense of belonging on the high school campus was also featured. Performances depicted the value of the white cane to our students and the **CSB** community and how its use has shaped the independence of the blind and visually impaired nationwide.



Trip to see the King Tut museum

On January 11, 2010, the students in Ms. Durski's class traveled to San Francisco to see the King Tutankhamen and the Golden Age of the Pharaohs exhibit at the De Young



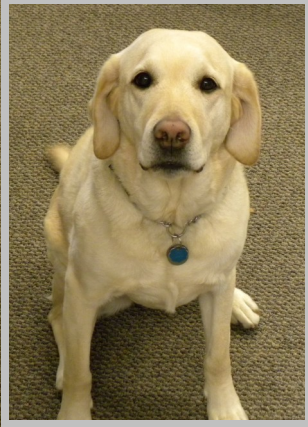
Museum. After the docent led tour, the students participated in a "touch" tour

consisting of replicas of some the artifacts in the exhibit and a small stone jar that was over 3,000 years old!

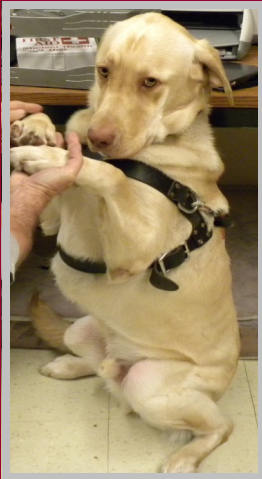


By: Mary Durski

Guide Dogs of CSB



Noelani
Owner:
Ann Gelles,
Braille Teacher



Rutler
Owner:
Wayne Siligo,
Music Teacher

Outdoor Education can be fun! By: Student, Jack Veliquette

I went on a four day night trip to Monterey for outdoor education. Three activities were my favorite while I was there.

First I liked the Kelp Forest at the aquarium. I loved the divers feeding the fish and talking to the audience while he was in the kelp forest tank. It was 28 feet deep in the tank and it had many schools of fish and different species of sea life. The fish were all gathered around him because they seemed to know the diver.

Next I enjoyed pulling the ice plant. We were helping restore Aeolian Dunes back to normal so the native California plants that were being affected could grow again at the site across from the old Fort Ord. Once the ice plant was removed the California animals that were being killed off could come back and have the native plants as shelter.

Third I went Kayaking. You had to hold the paddle a

certain way to move through the water. You had to do a pattern left-right, left-right, left-right. When we were about to go under the bridge we smelled the seals. They smelled like stinky fish.

I definitely enjoyed my trip to Monterey. Looking into the Kelp Forest was like looking underneath the surface of the ocean into clear water all the way to the bottom. Pulling the ice plant at Fort Ord made me feel I was helping to bring back native California plants. Having lunch on the water in the kayak was a great experience for me. I would like to go back and repeat the trip and all the fun experiences, but next time without a cast on my arm.



Apartment Living Program

By: Kristi Barrella

The California School for the Blind, Apartment Living Program (ALP) is an educational program in a residential setting. It provides students the challenge and opportunity for independent living prior to living on their own. The program provides realistic experiences for students to develop and refine their daily living skills and to use them in their lives. There is limited

supervision in this program; thus allowing students to take on more responsibilities like learn to make decisions and to be less dependent on others. In January, one of the Apartment Living Program students organized a trip to San Francisco to walk across the Golden Gate Bridge and then go to lunch at a nearby location. The trip was fun and educational for all!



Recipe Corner

Submitted by: Vivian Rudder

Graham Cracker-Peanut Butter Chocolate Cookies

Ingredients:

- Graham Crackers
- Peanut Butter
- Chocolate Candy melts

Melt candy melts in microwave or slow cooker

Break graham crackers in half, then in half again. Be careful when breaking into sections.

Spread peanut butter on one side of 2—1/4 pieces of the graham crackers, put other 2 pieces on top.

Dip crackers into chocolate mixture, coat graham cracker cookie with chocolate mixture, scrape off excess.

Put graham crackers on cookie sheet lined with wax paper, put in refrigerator till set. Transfer to air tight container. Crackers can be frozen.

Optional: You can use Marshmallow Crème in place of peanut butter. You can also use white chocolate candy melts instead of milk chocolate.



A visit to Cung Le's Gym

By: Jason Tucker

This year the wrestling and karate programs are off to a great start. Currently only in the training phase of the wrestling program, in time we hope that the desire and skill level that the students are developing will reach a level adequate for competition. Currently a



co-ed group of about 10-16 students participate in a one-hour amateur wrestling training session twice per week. A one hour Karate training session is held immediately after wrestling. Some

students participate in both training sessions and some only do one or the other but the class sizes are about the same. Judo training sessions are conducted on the alternate two days of the week and focus on moves that can be modified for the wrestling mat. Most students participating in these sessions tend to be on an advanced wrestling track however, we have also worked with students who are just beginning who may have schedule conflicts with the wrestling and karate sessions.

Using the Martial Arts, students learn about their own body in relation to others; developing precision special skills and body mechanics, strength, flexibility, and physical endurance. The first thing that is taught in wrestling and judo is how to fall without sustaining serious injury. This is

a foundational block from which everyone could benefit. Students are developing their bodies and minds in a way that many sighted people strive to reach. In the martial arts people have always trained their bodies, minds and spirits to work together in a harmonious and consciously directed effort. It is considered advantageous to develop the senses enough to rely more on the feeling of and orientation of the body to an opponent and other surroundings.

Some of the students and coaches were able to take a field trip to a prominent martial arts dojo in San Jose whose founder is movie actor and world champion Cung Le. All of the students who were able to attend met with Cung Le and his instructors and received personally autographed photos of Cung Le taken from a clip in one of his recent movies. From my personal and observed experiences the martial arts teaches a balance of physical, emotional, and spiritual virtues such as; integrity, respect, courage, honor, compassion, honesty, sincerity, duty, loyalty, and self discipline. We believe that these are virtues that everyone should attempt to embody in their own lives and we are proud of the students who are making strides to improve themselves on many different levels while facing many difficult obstacles.

